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Since he cannot be got out of bed because of the danger of a fatal blood clot resulting from the phlebitis, and since if he stays in bed he is certain to have a bad bout of pneumonia, it was feared the party might have to be cancelled at the last hour in the event he died. With his usual buoyancy, although running a fever, he was still alive at a late hour this evening.

Another unexpected bit of news came through in the late afternoon. The Prime Minister has made a shuffle in the Cabinet. The heads of seven Ministers have been severed from their political bodies; their replacements have been announced. Selwyn Lloyd is foremost amongst the decapitated; he is to be replaced by Reggie Maudling. David Kilmuir is to be created an Earl; David Eccles is to be translated to the peerage; Harold Watkinson will be succeeded by Peter Thorneycroft. So it goes. Since many politicians were at the Blenheim ball, there was much congregation in corners while these interesting events were mulled over.

July 14, 1962 - Saturday

We rose at nine o'clock, to take a train for London, since we were giving a lunch for Stephen Spender and his wife, the Melvin Laskys, and the George Wests. This was a brilliant group. Mary McCarthy (Mrs. George West) is not only a considerable literary figure, but an outstanding conversationalist. I read avidly each issue of Spender and Lasky's "Encounter". Both their wives are unusually pleasing. Priscilla and Albert Jaretski were the only other couple. I wish they were staying with us.

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Some people came in for drinks, and afterwards we had dinner with the children, who had young friends as guests.

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Although no philosopher, and seldom truly witty, he was agreeable in conversation, excelling in mimicry. His taste in painting and furniture was more distinguished than that of any predecessor except possibly Richard II and Charles I. Always crippled by debt, but not deterred from acquisition, he purchased, especially during the convulsions of the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic disturbances, some of the greatest treasures now cherished in this country.

But it was in respect to architecture that his passions were most flamboyantly manifest. Alas, Carlton House has vanished, but Windsor Castle, the Regents Park development, and the Brighton Pavilion remain as illustrations of the originality of his inclinations.

He was one of many rulers afflicted or benefited by a mania for building. Augustus Caesar boasted that he found Rome brick and left it marble. Later royal spendthrifts were accused by their subjects of wasting the public patrimony to gratify their personal architectural whims. Notable among them were Ludwig II of Bavaria, and Louis XIV of France. Yet, who today would question that the vast extravagances of those two Kings are not now more productive of revenue than if they had balanced contemporary budgets?

On the morrow of George IV's death, the London Times excoriated his memory, in a bitter editorial largely devoted to his building ventures. Tonight, congregated here in his greatest fantasy, who would wish that he had led the same austere life as did his father who was unremarkable for inspiration.

Throughout his regency and kingship, there was much to mock at. His girth became monstrous, as befitted a man with a gargantuan appetite for food, whetted by the possession of the great Chef Careme. Gout was his constant curse. His exuberant figure was compressed by corsets. Few chairs could sustain his weight; his carriages had to be drawn by a pair or a trio of horses.

He had his foibles, many of them as prominent as his bulk. If, in some particulars, he was a cad, his charm, so irresistible to women, was his self-betrayer.

The grossness of his habits is not to be entirely wondered at. He was the child of his time, delighting in blood sports, but oddly enough, not addicted to deep gambling, which ruined many brilliant men and women of the Eighteenth Century.

His temperament was lusty, robust, buoyant, imaginative. He preserved, even in drunkenness, a certain regal dignity and courtesy. There were few mischances that he did not regard with equanimity, if properly sustained by a series of brandy and water potations.

Perhaps he exceeded his prerogatives in expressing political preferences in his Whiggish days. But, at least, the objects of his affection deserved it. He loved Charles James Fox, signalled out Sheridan for his versatile genius, and fell, as so many did, under the spell of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

During his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, he was for a long time, devoted and tender; his volatile amorousness lay mostly in the past and future. His German wife was too pathetic and unstable to have fixed his attentions. Her celebrated legal case caused him great unpopularity, but who, in retrospect, cannot find some valid excuses for this mettlesome prince, allied with one of the dullest, stupidest and most ill-behaved of women?

Many other men courted death in vain battle against the bottle. Dissipated he was in almost every respect, a glutton of life. But infinitely more resourceful and admirable persons than himself, exposed to lesser temptations, exceeded him in foolish conduct.

The tying of a stock, a skill brought to perfection by his discarded friend Beau Brummel, the fit of a coat, the attempt to substitute black for white in evening dress, and many another trifle, occupied too much of his leisure, but do we not overestimate how else he might, in the light of his limited powers and judgment, have been employed? His six brothers were no paragons of virtue or accomplishment -- Florizel was perhaps the best of the lot.

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